

The blessedness of living and dying in the Lord.

PROVED in a 9
S E R M O N

Preached upon the DEATH of
The Rev^d. Mr. THO^s. JONES,
Chaplain of St Saviours, Southwark,
Who departed this life June 6, 1762,

A N D
Printed for the Benefit of his Widow.

By W. R O M A I N E, M. A.
Lecturer of St. Dunstons in the West.

This God is our God for ever and ever, he will be
our guide even unto death. Ps. xlviii. 14.

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PSALM. cxvi. 15.

*Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death
of his saints.*

IT is appointed unto all men once to die. They all die, because all have sinned: For the wages of sin is death. When sin entered into the world, death came in by sin, and death hath reigned so far as sin hath spread itself. The word is gone out of the Lord's mouth against all flesh, *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.* This is the immutable decree of heaven, and when it comes to be executed upon the natural man in his fallen unregenerate state, death is to him the king of terrors, because it finds sin upon him unpardoned. The sting of death being sin, and the strength of sin being the law, if the law charge sin upon the conscience, and stir up in it a sense of guilt, then will it arm death with a most dreadful sting. The soul will be terrified with the thoughts of meeting an offended God, and of standing at his awful bar to be tried for the breach of his holy and just law: For already conscience has ratified the sentence which is to deliver the soul over to the tormentors to dwell with them in everlasting burnings. Oh! death! how inexpressibly terrible is thine approach to such an unpardoned sinner? But to them who are in a regenerate state and have lived by
faith

faith in the Lord Christ, and are now dying in him, death has no sting. As their life was precious, so is their death precious in the eyes of the Lord. With the tenderest love he appoints the time, the place, and all the circumstances of their dying. When he lays them on the bed of languishing, he gives them the consolations of the gospel, and lets them know how dear and precious they are to him. This produces a sweet resignation to his will, and calls forth the delightful exercise of patience to his sovereign appointment. And while the outward man decays, he continues his grace to the inward man. His strength is then indeed perfected in their weakness, when the divine life in the soul flourishes amidst the ruins of the animal frame: So that faith by his mighty operation is still working joy and peace in the dying breast; and ceases not till it has done its last kind office, and rendered the concluding act of life an act of faith, according to what is written of the saints of old, *These all died in faith.*

This was the happy case of our dear departed brother. He had sweet experience of the truth of the text, and found that his soul was bound in the bundle of life with the Lord his God. His last sickness was altogether sweetened with divine love. His faith, his resignation, his comforts failed him not. A gracious God shewed how dear
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and precious he was to him by removing every thing far from him, which could render death in the least dreadful. He was not even suffered to have one doubt concerning his interest in Christ, but lived happy throughout his illness, and died rejoicing. To the glory of that rich grace which was so exceeding abundant towards him, I have been led to speak upon the occasion; not to exalt man, but God. Not for the honour of the deceased, but for the profit of the living; that when you hear what God has promised to do, and what he is daily doing for his people in their dying hours, you may be stirred up to desire, that you may also die the death of the righteous, and that your latter end may be like his. For which purpose I shall through God's help speak to these particulars mentioned in the text, and shew,

First, Who the persons are, that are here spoken of under the name of *Saints*;

Secondly, how precious they are in the eyes of the Lord, and

Thirdly, how precious they are to him not only in life, but also in death. These points I will endeavor to illustrate from scripture, and from the Lord's dealings with our deceased brother. May that good God who
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did so much for him favor us also with his gracious presence, and accompany us with his blessing, while we are considering,

First, who the persons are, that are here spoken of under the name *saints*. This name conveys a strange idea to some persons. They think that a *saint* denotes some vastly high and uncommon degree of holiness, to which very few have attained since the apostles time, and therefore they give the title to none but the red letter'd saints in the Calendar, and some few of the primitive fathers. They would strongly suspect a man of being a rank phanatic, who was to apply it to those that are now living in the true faith and fear of God, or to those that are lately dead. Such power has custom over the best of words, as to give them a turn quite foreign to their true meaning. The scripture speaks of saints in the old testament, men of like passions with us, and the new testament applies the word to all the believers in the churches of Rome, and Corinth, and Ephesus, and Philippi, &c. So that it is a general name for all the Lord's people; not for some by way of eminence, but for the whole household and family of faith. The old testament has two Hebrew words, which our translators render *saints*, altho' the meaning of them be a good deal different. The one is *Kedesh*,
holy,

holy, separate from impurity, the other is *Chesed* the word in the text, which signifies mercy, and in the form it is here used denotes those who have received mercy, and who are partakers of the covenant mercies of God in Christ Jesus. These are all given to them freely; without money, and without price: For misery being the proper object of mercy, and God being the sovereign disposer of his own mercy, he bestows it on the miserable, as it pleaseth him, to the glory of his grace. None have any claim. None deserve it; but all men are through sin in justice and equity cut off from it. Whoever therefore among the children of wrath meet with mercy from God they must receive it as a free gift coming from his mere love and unmerited bounty through Jesus Christ: and on that account they should be ever acknowledging it with praise and gratitude. The state of guilt and misery from which they were raised, the abundant, exceeding abundant mercy already received in a state of pardon and acceptance, and the eternal mercy to be experienced in a state of glory, these should stir them up to shew forth the praises of him, who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God, which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

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These are the *saints* here spoken of, such as have obtained mercy freely by the grace that is in Jesus Christ. If you ask in what way, or by what means they were brought into this happy state? It was by the word and Spirit of God. He convinced them of sin by the word. He made use of the law as the ministration of condemnation to bring them in guilty, and as the ministration of death to shew them what their guilt deserved. They saw these things, but did not find themselves quite helpless. Their pride and unbelief still laboured to do some work that might recommend them to God, but the Holy Spirit clearly convinced them, that they could not be saved by any works of righteousness which they could do, but that God saveth sinners freely through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ. This is the hardest lesson in the school of grace. They learnt it by degrees, and very slowly; but the Holy Spirit made them masters of it, and they were glad to submit to be saved by grace freely. Upon which God shewed them great mercy: For he enabled them to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. They had power to trust the word of promise, and to rest upon God's faithfulness to fulfill it to their souls. And in thus believing they found peace with God through the righteousness of Christ, and joy springing from the sense of their safety and happiness in him, and love to God for his great love to them, which

which peace, and joy, and love increased in their hearts, as they lived more by faith upon Christ, and walked more closely with Christ. In this way the Lord made them *saints*, or shewed them mercy. It was by some such experience, that they became partakers of the tender mercies of our God. And having received them freely, should not this be continually upon their minds. "what hast thou that thou hast not received?" They would forget their very name and character, namely, those that had received mercy, if by thinking of themselves more highly than they ought to think, they should rob the Lord Christ of the praise of the glory of his grace. The more he gives, the more are they in debt. The greater are their gifts, the higher are their graces, still all is from God, freely given, freely continued. And when they happily finish their course, and receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away, it will be mercy still, mercy magnified as the blessings are which it bestows, a glorified body—and soul,—admitted to the vision and enjoyment of God in heaven—and to eternity—all this is mercy, free mercy, as one sweetly sings, Ps. cxxxvi. and seems never tired of repeating the delightful words, "This is mercy that endureth for ever."

In what I have been saying under this head I had a particular view all along to the experience of our deceased brother. He was certainly one of the *saints* in the text—one who had found mercy. He was al-

ways ready to ascribe all that he was and had (except what were entirely his own, sin and misery) to free mercy and sovereign grace. Before the Lord was pleased to call him he was walking in the error of his ways, like others, who know not God. Such is the condition of mankind since the fall, that there is none righteous, no not one, there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are altogether become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no not one; not one of them can do any good, till grace come; and when it comes, it first discovers this their guilty helpless state, and convinces them of it, in order that they may be willing to receive their deliverance freely from the mercy of God, and to give him all the glory of it in time and in eternity. No wonder then that the time was, when our brother walked, as other men also walk, in the vanity of his mind, having his understanding darkened, and being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that was in him, because of the blindness of his heart. Of this God made him deeply sensible, and he was never ashamed to own it. His first awakening was by the gradual working of the law upon his conscience. It was not by outward means, such as hearing the word preached, or by some afflicting providence, sickness, trouble, or the like, but by the inward conviction of sin, that the Spirit of God wrought upon his

his conscience. He had his strongest convictions where he could have no means. The views which he had hereby of his state and danger were very deep and very distressing. While he was under this soul-concern my acquaintance first began with him. And since that time, which is about eight years ago, our great intimacy and friendship has given me a constant opportunity of being a witness of God's gracious dealings with his soul. He went mourning for a long time, bowed down under the sense of guilt and the power of unbelief. In this school of humiliation he learnt self-knowledge. Here he was taught the sad effect of a ruined spoiled nature, of a soul depraved in all its faculties, and estranged from the mind and will of God, and governed by its own corrupt and stubborn will, commanding the body to give up its members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin. Here he was taught what sin is, namely the transgression of the law, which is exceeding sinful, because the law is holy, just and good, a perfect copy of the divine perfections. Here he was taught the damnable nature of heart sin, which is the fountain, from which all sin flows, and which in the heart of the natural man is ever flowing over. He learnt these lessons with such a deep experience, that the impression lasted all his days. For when God shewed him great mercy, and he was enabled to believe
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in the Lord Jesus, yet still he found nothing of himself wherein to glory. Humble and low in his own eyes, he was ready to give the honour to whom alone honour was due. Yea, after he was greatly strengthened and established, so as to live by faith on the Son of God, still he knew that all was mercy. Mercy, free mercy had from him all the praise. And this was so much the frame and abiding temper of his mind, that it appeared on all occasions. His spiritual friends and acquaintance can bear me witness, that he was cloathed with humility, and that he walked humbly with his God. A demonstration this, that he had found mercy, because he had made it the end and aim of his life to shew forth the praises of that free mercy, which he had so freely received; and as he lived, so he died, acknowledging himself an object of mercy. One of his last sayings was — “ I am of the church of the first born, who shall stand on mount Sion—One chosen from among my brethren—A sinner saved, a sinner saved.” Here was great faith, and great humility.

Having thus exemplified the character of the persons mentioned in my text from the experience of our deceased brother, I go on to consider,

Secondly, an inestimable blessing belonging to all the persons of this character, namely, they are precious in the eyes of the Lord. Not precious in themselves, but made precious by the grace of God in Christ

Jesus; For the motives to all the acts of God are within himself. He does not look into the sinner expecting to see something precious in him to recommend him to mercy, but he sets his love upon him, and that love brings every thing precious with it. Love disposes God to shew mercy, convinces the sinner he wants it, inclines him to take it freely, and when he receives it by precious faith, then he becomes vitally united to a precious Christ. Such the Lord counts among his jewels. He sees them accepted in the Beloved, and members of his mystical body. As he loves the head, so he loves the members: For my Father himself loveth you, saith Christ, because ye have loved me; and what cannot, what will not the Fathers love bestow? Nay, what has he not engaged to bestow? For what tongue can relate the exceeding great and precious promises, which he has made to them, who are heirs of God and joynt heirs with Christ? Grace, faith, righteousness, adoption, strength to overcome temptations, to conquer spiritual enemies, to bear afflictions, whatever is needful for life and godliness, in short all things are theirs, for they all work together under God for their good. These and many many more are the promises, which the mercy of God has made, and his faithfulness is daily fulfilling to his adopted children in Christ Jesus; from whence it appears how precious they are in
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his sight. The greatness of the gifts shews the love of the giver. He gives them, oh most adorable, and most delightful truth! he gives himself. God himself is their God, their covenant God, and with himself how shall he not also freely give them all things? he becomes a father unto them, a loving reconciled father, to watch over them with a parents tender affection, and to see that they want no manner of thing that is good. "I the Lord do keep my vineyard, I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day. He that toucheth it, toucheth the apple of mine eye." His childrens enemies are his. So safe and happy are they in his precious love, that none shall pluck them out of his hands. He will keep them by his mighty power through faith unto salvation. Never, never will he leave them or forsake them; but having loved them freely, he will love them unto the end.

But let us bring this matter to a point. What saith the scripture? "Yea, he loved the people. All thy saints are in thy hands, and they are humbled at thy feet to receive thy words." Deut. xxxiii. 3. His love makes his people saints, and then keeps them in his hands, in an humble frame of mind to hear the word of God, and to obey it. Such honour have all his saints! So precious and dear are they to him, that he has expressly promised to keep them from all evil, and to bless them with
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all good. " There shall no evil befall thee," Ps. xci. 10. no outward evil, but what I will make the means of promoting my glory and thy good, therefore " Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine. When thou passest thro' the waters, I will be with thee, and thro' the rivers, they shall not overflow thee : When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." Isai. xliii. 1, 2. Whence this tender care and watchful providence? God would have his people know and believe, that when he keeps them, nothing can hurt them. For they are so precious and honourable in his sight, that his almighty arm will either defend them from, or else keep them patient and happy under, outward troubles, according to these sweet Words, which follow in the fourth verse, " Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee," and shewed my love, not in keeping thee from the water and the fire, but in bringing thee safe through both : And I will do greater things than these. O taste and see that the Lord is good ! they that seek him shall not want any good thing. Ps. xxxiv. 10. What promises are these ! No good belonging to life, no good belonging to godliness shall be withheld ; but all good shall be freely given them out of the fulness of Christ Jesus. How precious then must these persons be in the
Lord's

Lord's fight, with whom he deals in this wonderful manner? What mercy, how free, how rich, what blessings, how great, how numerous has he for them? even in this life, he has more mercy to shew, more blessings to give, than we can either ask or think. And what then will he give in another life? The mercies of glory, the blessings of heaven none can adequately know, till they experience them. May the grace of God make you and me meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

Thus precious are the Lord's people. Dear and honourable are they in his fight. The testimonies of his word to this purpose are very numerous, and daily experience confirms them. Every child of God is a witness of his heavenly Father's abundant mercy. But few had more reason to magnify and exalt it, than our dear deceased brother. He was indeed precious in the Lord's fight, as appeared from the inestimably rich graces bestowed upon him, and the great works wrought by him. God had given him faith, and he enabled him to live the life of faith. By faith the christian is engrafted as a branch, into the true vine. And as the branch receives sap and juices from the stock, into which it is engrafted, to bring forth leaves, and fair blossoms and ripe fruit: So does the christian receive from the Lord Christ by virtue of union with him proper influence and nourishment to bring forth the fruits of righteousness. Our brother was a fruitful branch. He did not
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seek to bear fruit to make himself alive: The fruit does not make the tree alive; but to testify his love and gratitude, to do good to men, and above all to fulfill what is written—"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." John, xv. 8. that ye keep faith so constantly in act and exercise upon me, as to be always receiving out of my fulness grace for grace: For life and the acts of life in every grace are in and from me, and the more you live by faith upon me, the more will my Father be glorified. This was what Mr. Jones happily experienced in his heart and in his life. Whoever believeth aright with his heart will be kept in an humble dependance upon God, and in calling upon him to fulfill the promises of grace and strength in every hour of need: So that the promises freely made in Christ may be freely made good thro' Christ. While he is in this right frame the soul lives out of itself, it sees nothing of its own to trust to or to rest in, but puts forth the empty hand to be constantly filled out of Christ's fulness. A person who lives thus by faith will be humble in heart. Every act of this faith declares his emptiness and want of all spiritual good, while it leads to Christ for his promised supply. Need I mention how much this was our brother's case? Certainly you know it. He was humble indeed. The witnesses are as many as knew him, and when there could be no view in deceiving any body, when he was waiting for his dissolution, he demonstrated how greatly the Lord had humbled him. He told me in his last sickness, when I discoursed with him about the

state of his soul, that as a dying man he had nothing to trust to but the righteousness of Jesus Christ; and that his faith in it had been so strengthened in his illness, that he had not one doubt or fear. But how much he was emptied of self, and enabled to live in an humble dependance upon the grace and strength of Christ will best appear from his life, in which thro' faith many precious fruits were produced.

The principal work of a believer throughout his christian walk is the mortifying of the old man of sin, and the quickening and strengthening of the new man. So long as we are in this mortal body, every day must this work be repeated. The flesh will be lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: And he that is spiritual not only believes in the merit of Christ's death to save him from the guilt, but is also enabled to apply the power and efficacy of his death to subdue and crucify the dominion of those lustings. Subdued they must be. They must not reign. The promise is, *Sin, inward as well as outward, shall not have dominion over you.* The believer relying upon this promise proclaims war against all inward lusts and risings of sin, and sets upon them in the power and strength of the Lord; and so long as he looks up to Christ for fresh succours, he will be kept safe. As the old man is thus subdued, the new man is enabled more powerfully to put forth the proper acts of his spiritual life: For the deadening of the one is the quickening of the other. Of this spiritual conflict I have often read, especially in an excellent treatise of Dr. Owen's *upon indwelling sin*; but I learnt
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most of it by experience, by many sore and daily conflicts in my own soul, and by frequent conversation with our dear brother. He was much exercised this way, and the Lord did wonders for him in giving him grace to crucify the old man of sin. God's great love appeared in his great chastenings: for whom he loveth he chasteneth. He refines all his people in the furnace of afflictions. *There* our brother had been refining for some years, and much dross had been done away. Because he was precious in the sight of the Lord, he was tried, like gold, and purified seven times in the fire. For some years past he was afflicted with a disorder which kept him low, and often brought him to death's door. During these years his growth in grace was very evident to all his spiritual friends. We could see a manifest victory gained over the old man, whose power was weakened in his members which are upon the earth. He grew also dead to the world, and experienced what the apostle means, when he says, *The world is crucified to me, and I unto the world.* Its pleasures, its riches, its honours were nothing to him. He did not despise them because he could not get them, but he parted with them freely, when he had them in his own power. God had provided for him a comfortable maintenance, but he laid up nothing, except for the poor, to whom he gave liberally of what he had, and with a willing mind. As to honour, he wanted not that which was from men. He was led to choose a better. He has it now. And this deadness to the world was of great use to him when he came to die. Then he had the comfort of it, as appeared from that sweet expression of his

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on his death-bed, "It is not dying out of the world, but dying in the world, and parting with all its toys and trifles, and that not with sickness or pain." And being thus by faith dead to the world while in it, what should make him afraid to die out of it? He had been so long kept under the cross, that it had been the means of crucifying the world unto him, of subduing his own will and his own tempers, of trying his faith, and of exercising his patience. In this school of affliction he was enabled to profit greatly. Therein he learnt resignation to the will of God, which made him under his long and great weakness of body kiss the rod and be thankful, and which delivered him from impatience, fretfulness, murmuring, and those selfish tempers, that want to have our will, and not God's to be done. There he learnt to live by faith upon Christ in all his offices, as a prophet to teach him wisdom to lead him to God, as a priest to bring him near to God by his atoning blood and righteousness, and as a king to keep him near to God, ruling in him and over him. This faith was tried, and it grew by trials. The more it was exercised the more did he find of the safety and happiness of living by faith upon the Son of God. And hereby he learnt what the patience of the saints is. Patience is an act of faith under outward afflictions, looking up to God for grace to hold out, as long as the afflictions last. Thus did our brother's patience. Under a long illness he was never heard to murmur; and upon his death-bed he was afraid of nothing but impatience, and God out of the tenderest love kept him, until patience had done its perfect work. And

As the cross was thus made profitable to the mortification of the old man, so was it to the quickening and strengthening of the new man. He had many precious graces, but don't mistake me. Whatever Mr. Jones had, except sin, he had it from Christ; whose love to him I would magnify from the greatness of the blessings bestowed. You could not converse with him without being put in mind of the meekness and gentleness of Christ. In his behaviour, in his conversation he shewed, that he had put on as one of the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, long-suffering; ready to bear with others, and ready to forgive, as Christ had also freely forgiven him. These amiable tempers of the new man appeared in all his conduct; and particularly when he stood up to minister in holy things, one might discover throughout great kindness and tender love to precious souls. His own flock, to whom the Lord had made him an overseer, was much upon his heart. How earnest have I often heard him in prayer for them? And to the last he did not forget them. In his sickness he would be often crying out, "Lord feed thy sheep, Lord feed thy sheep." He was always studying and contriving something, that might be useful to their best interest. There is an alms-house in the parish called the College, and some small stipend for doing duty in it. Mr. Jones thought it was not right to take the money, unless he did the duty. Accordingly he began to read prayers; and to expound the scripture in the Col-

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lege chapple, and went on for some time. The congregation used to be very large, and the success was very great. Many souls were in this place first awakened, who are now walking in the faith and fear of God, adorning the gospel of our Saviour. But here he was stopt and refused the use of the chapple. After this he set up a weekly lecture in his church, but he had not preached it long, before he was denied the use of the pulpit. However he was not discouraged, he went on giving away good books, some of which he carried in person to every house in the parish; catechising the children, who came weekly to his house for that purpose; and paying religious visits among his parishioners, when they used to talk freely of the state of their souls. By these methods he tried to win his people to Christ, beside the stated duties of his office; in performing of which he seemed to set God always before him, and to be greatly drawn out in love to his hearers, of whom a very great number I trust did frequent his ministry, not led thither by the ease of his delivery, the sweetness of his voice, or the smoothness of his periods, but because they felt the weight and importance of the doctrines preached. Several I am myself acquainted with, who will I hope be his joy and crown of rejoycing in the day of the Lord Jesus, who hearing him preach upon the entire ruin of man by the fall, were convinced that they were in this state, and upon the entire recovery of man thro' Jesus Christ were enabled by his word and Spirit to believe in him for righteousness, and to live upon him for grace to walk, as he also walked. I mention not these things to set him above
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any of the Lord's ministers. He had no such thoughts when living. No one could think more meanly of himself, than he did. And God forbid that I should intend to lessen others by exalting him. No. Grace, free grace is all I want to exalt. As he was adorned with so many graces in his private life, and with so many public gifts, who should have the praise, but the giver of them all, even that good God who shewed him mercy, and in whose sight he was so precious, as to have his marvellous lovingkindness continued even unto death; which leads me to that part of my subject, where we must still continue our adoration and thanks under the

Third and last head, which was to shew how precious the saints are in the sight of the Lord, not only in life, but also in death. Whom the Lord loveth, he loveth unto the end. His love is like himself, without variableness or shadow of turning, and then often manifested in the clearest manner, when it is most wanted. The Lord looks with an especial love on his poor afflicted and distressed people. Indeed their troubles are tokens of his love; they come from his love to them, and are the means of drawing forth their love to him. One who had been long trained up in this way declared upon his own experience, that it was good for him he had been in trouble. As troubles increase, so do the proofs of his love, in strengthening faith to trust still, and to enable patience to hold out. And when the last great trial comes, love orders it all. The death of the saints, however superficially some may judge of it, is appointed by the infinite tenderness of God, as to all its circumstances. They may fancy he loves those
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most whom he takes out of the world without much pain or long sickness, but this is judging after the flesh. God can get himself most glory, by them who suffer most, and can make them the happiest, who suffer the longest. He can preserve their faith in the hottest trials. He can keep them for years in the fire, and the smell of it not pass upon them. He can arm them with grace to endure not with patience only, but also with joy; so that they shall taste much of the love of God, and count it all joy when he tries them with his fiery trials. And when he is finishing their course, he shews then how exceedingly precious they are to him. Then he brings the graces of the new man into strong act and exercise, as the body droops. He keeps faith lively and vigorous, hope rejoices, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life, and love shed abroad in the heart gives sweet earnest and foretaste of the speedy enjoyment of that glory. These graces make the approach of death welcome, as our deceased brother found it in his last moments, when he said—"An eternal life of glory for a life of misery—who would not change misery for happiness? Hasten, hasten, dear Lord." That the Lord's people are thus precious to him in death is evident from the promises in his word, and from the daily accomplishment of them. These promises are left upon record for the support of faith in a dying hour, and they are rich cordials for fainting spirits. This is for the sick bed, Pf. xli. 3. "The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing, thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness," strengthen him inwardly as the outward man decays, and he shall lay easy upon his bed refreshed with the Lord's

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inward comforts, while the body is languishing. And when the body grows very weak and death is approaching here is a cordial—"This God is our God for ever and ever, he will be our guide even unto death," Ps. xlviii. 14. This God is our covenant God, whose mercies fail not; he will guide us safe by his love and power, even until the body draws its last breath and expires. Who would not wish to have such a blessed guide unto the verge of life! Lord, guide us all thither, and when the life of nature is ending, then fulfill thy faithful promise, Prov. xiv. 32. "The righteous hath hope in his death," not only in his sickness, but also in the very moment of death he hath hope, and the next moment he enjoys the thing hoped for. These are sure words of promise, which cannot be broken, and God be thanked for the accomplishment of them. He has been fulfilling them in every age, and speaking peace thro' Jesus Christ to his saints in their death. It is written of them in the old testament, who thro' faith and patience inherited the promises—"These all died in faith," Heb. xi. 13. they had faith while they were dying, and believed that the time was now come, when God would fulfill his exceeding great and precious promises to them in a life of eternal glory; and therefore it is said, "they fell asleep," they fell into the arms of death as composedly, as a weary traveller falls asleep, expecting to awake in the morning of the resurrection with glorified bodies, like the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. And as these all died in faith, so do believers to this very day. The Lord is faithful to his word, and his promises are still made good. His people are at present as safe in his hands, as happy in his

love as they were in any former age. Still they say with their last breath, "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord." The present times afford many instances of this triumphant faith, and there is a very striking one before us. Whose death was ever more precious, than our brothers, in the sight of the Lord? How could God shew his love to him upon his dying bed, more than he did? Altho' his fever was violent for seven days, yet his soul was still and calm. He was not troubled with any fear of death; that was kindly taken away. He had no doubt concerning his eternal state. He was made patient to God's will, bore pain without murmuring, and waited the Lord's time for his release. Were not these undoubted proofs of God's special love to him? He suffered his faith to be tried in the fire, that it might come out, like gold, purer and brighter; and it stood the fire, rejoyced in it, and was refined by it. In one of his weakest hours he said "Blessed be the Lord for that degree of faith, which he hath given me, tho' it has operated in so weak a manner, yet I have many blessed and comfortable marks in my own soul of his love to me." Here was faith, and much humility. He could find nothing in himself to put the least trust in as to his acceptance with God, and therefore his trust was stronger in Christ. This shewed itself in what he said on his death-bed, "What an unfelt, what an unthought of corruption is here both in body and soul," he felt more of it, and in a greater degree than he had ever thought of before, and yet this deep sense of his corruption did not drive him from Christ, but made his faith cleave the closer to him: "My flesh and my heart faileth

faileth, faith he, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." His ground for this he declared was, "a covenant of mercy, free grace in the Lord Jesus." In which knowing that he had his share, he could say, "Now let thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation—Now, Lord, I can lay me down in peace and safely take my rest." In this happy frame he was praying, "Lord, secure a soul thou hast died to save." Then after a pause he cried, "He will, he will. I have part here, I shall have all soon." O what precious, precious faith was this! What great love did the Lord manifest to him in thus strengthening his faith on the bed of languishing, and visiting him with the sight of his salvation. As he said on Friday, "I have had a glorious view of the love of Christ to my soul this morning." This love shed abroad in his heart brought many sweet words out of his dying mouth, such as, "For me to live is Christ, to die is gain." He knew that Christ would be his gain in death, as well as in life, and therefore he prayed, "Come Lord Jesus, come quickly, and give me an easy dismissal—Lord give me an easy dismissal to a blessed eternity." And this triumph of faith held out to the last. He looked forward with joy when he said, "Before this time to-morrow, it may be, I shall be where all sorrow shall be done away;" and at another time he said, "I shall have a sabbath of Trinity before I thought of it to worship a triune God," which was granted him. He kept his Trinity Sunday in heaven adoring the Three Persons in one Jehovah.

I am so particular in relating the dying words of our dear brother, because each of them is a confirmation

firmation of the text. The Lord says, the death of the saints is precious in his sight, and our brother's experience demonstrates the truth of the Lord's word. He was enabled to say great things for God, and in every sentence he spake the love as well as the faithfulness of God was manifest. Was there not great faith, and great conjugal affection in what he said to Mrs. Jones? "Don't be surprized at any alteration you may see in me: For death always makes strange alterations. When the Lord is pleased to give me my dismissal, rejoyce over my corpse, and praise God for what we have suffered together here, and for what we shall enjoy together hereafter." May the Lord make up her loss, and give her to rejoyce in the comforts of his salvation here, and to enjoy the blessings of it hereafter. Towards his latter end he was much in prayer. These were some of his expressions. "The silver cords of life are breaking, and man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets—Lord, guide me home in safety, and lead me through the shadow of death.—This mortal shall soon put on immortality.—Though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another—I go hence like a shadow that declineth, I wither away like grass, but the Lord is the portion of my soul and my strong hope." His hope did not fail him. God was with him when he died, so that he had no evil to fear, when he went down into the valley and shadow of death. His body was left to rest in peace, and his soul is with that innumerable company, who are standing round the throne, and praising God and the Lamb for ever and ever.

Is this, my brethren, the faith of God's elect? Cannot death untie the bond of union between Christ and them? But are they so precious to him in their dying hours, that his love either keeps their faith firmly trusting on him, or else happily rejoicing in him? Oh sirs, if this be the case and a most certain matter of fact it is, give God the glory of our brother's death, and praise him for the abundant mercy which he then experienced. And altho' he was so soon taken from us, being but in his thirty-third year, yet remember what great things God did in him and by him, and be thankful; and remember what great things God did for him in his dying hours, and again repeat your thanks to him whose mercy endureth for ever. May he vouchsafe this same mercy to you and me in the same circumstances.

Having given all the glory to whom it is alone due, let us see what improvement this scripture will afford us. Have you been able, my brethren, to follow me in what I have been speaking, and is it your experience? Has God shewn you mercy? Have you any good evidence of his love to your souls, and are you living in the comfort of it? If this be your happy case, know ye not, that there is a great man fallen in Israel? One whom God made use of as a blessed instrument to bring sinners into the happy state, which you are in. Perhaps he was an instrument to some of you. And now the Lord has no more of this work for him, he takes him away. Is not this an awful providence? Should not it put you upon praying for the prosperity of our Sion? and teach you what manner of persons you ought to be? Should not your lips, your lives, your time, and all your talents

lents be shewing forth the praises of your good God? Should not you be seeking to live by faith upon Christ, and to receive out of his fulness grace to mortify sin, to deaden you to the world and its riches, and honors, and pleasures, to conquer satan, and to keep you alive to God, that you may have communion with him in life and death? For is not the time short? How short you know not. Perhaps in a day, perhaps in an hour, you may be in eternity. Keep this in your eyes, and remember, what an eternity will be in heaven. Take heed therefore that ye be found in your work, when death comes. If it find you living in faith, then you may hope to die comfortably in faith. If the world be crucified to you, you will find it easy to part with it. If you have been long fighting against your spiritual enemies, and against all filthiness of flesh and spirit, will it not be matter of joy to have the battle ended, and yourselves more than conquerors for ever? Oh sirs, is it not of eternal moment, that you live thus till the night of death come, that then your work being done, you may be ready to enter into the joy of your Lord?

If any of you say, I am a poor weak believer, and I am afraid, I shall have nothing to speak for God, when I come to die. Leave that to him. He does all things well. If he has any glory to get by your speaking, he will open your mouth. But all the Lord's people leave not such noble testimonies behind them as our brother did. He was a minister, and a young minister, cut off in the midst of life and usefulness. What if God had no more work for him to do among his own people, was he not precious in the Lord's eyes, that he should take him to himself, when he had borne

so little of the burden and heat of the day? What if God intended these dying sayings should preach for him to others, cannot God bless what means he pleases? Take heed that ye be also ready, and then leave God to do with you as seemeth him good in life and death.

Perhaps you may be a true believer, but you are apprehensive, you shall not be comforted, nor rejoyce upon your death-bed, as our brother did. Why do you distrust God? Is it not your business to live by faith to-day, and to take no thought for to-morrow? When to-morrow comes, then it is time enough to think about it. And the work of to-day is to be the work of to-morrow, and so on from day to day, the life you live in the flesh you must be living it by the faith of the Son of God. You cease to live thus, when times that may never come, and cases that may never be, interrupt the present actings of faith. Perhaps you may die suddenly, you may never lay upon a sick bed, or if you do, perhaps a quiet resignation to the will of God may be the grace you are then to exercise. For wise reasons God may not then fill you with great comforts. Is there not something very selfish in seeking these comforts? And is it not an unbelieving spirit to fear how you shall behave without them? What! cannot you trust your comforts with God, the God of all comfort? Will you not have time enough to be comforted, when you get to heaven? If you are in the way thither, and would get quietly on, leave yourself in God's hand, and let him do what he will. Trust him, even if it be in the dark, This direct act of faith is what God loves. It brings most honor to his word, and glory to his faithfulness. It shews what
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an high opinion you have of his perfections, that you can believe him without sight. Our deceased brother had this faith, and made a noble confession of it to a precious servant of Christ's, who went to see him in his illness and asked him, "how he did," he answered, "I am so full of pain and so ill, that I can think but little, but I know that Jesus is carrying on the interests of my poor soul notwithstanding." These are to me the choicest of his dying words. I see in them a well grounded trust and confidence in God, far more deep and solid, than all the rejoycing of triumphant faith. For when he had not this to comfort him, he had what was much better. When he had no sight, he could walk by faith. If God teach you, my brethren, to walk thus, you will not be troubled about what you are to have, or not to have, when you come to die. If you can say this, Father thy will be done, and can say it from your hearts, then let him appoint your death, and the time and manner of it, and your frame and temper of mind upon its approach, and depend upon it, he will order all things for the best.

Perhaps there may be some persons here very indifferent about the matter, whether God loves them, and whether they be precious in his sight or not. This comes from the love of present things. Their hearts are set upon the world. The objects about them have all their affections. Their eager pursuit after pleasures, honors, riches, and ease, sets death at a distance, and makes heaven not desirable. Tell such persons, how uncertain life is; they don't care, they will run the risque. Tell them, if they die in their sins, what their eternal state will be; they would not choose to be in ever-

everlasting torments, but they will venture it, rather than not enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. What a delusion are these persons under ! They believe that sin will bring eternal misery upon them, if not pardoned ; and yet they live to-day in sin, as if they were sure they should not be in hell before to-morrow. And they have no sort of evidence, that they shall be alive the next moment. Our time is in the hand of God, and he cuts it off when and how he pleases. Oh sirs, if you have ears to hear, hearken. Where will the course of life you are in end ? Stop a moment, and consider. Have you any sin in your hearts, any sin in your lives, which you cherish, and will not part with. What ! will you say ? I will keep it, its a blessed morsel, its a very heaven to me ; I don't care if I go to hell for it. And dare you defy the vengeance of the Almighty ; and with this thought return to the commission of it ? Suppose in the very act God should require your soul, and death carry you that moment from sinning to judgment. This has been. This may be again. And why not your case ? If it should—O what a thought is that !—If it should, what would you have to do throughout eternal ages, but wail and weep and gnash your teeth for having been so hardened thro' the deceitfulness of sin, as never to prepare to meet God in judgment. May the Lord awaken you to a serious consideration of these things, that you may flee from the wrath to come, and may be delivered by the tender mercies of our God from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of his dear Son,

The sum of what hath been now delivered is this. God is gracious to those whom he calls to the knowledge of himself in shewing them mercy, and in keeping them throughout their lives as his precious jewels, and throughout their dying hours his love is with them, and never leaves them nor forsakes them. The testimonies of scripture and of the people of God are undoubted evidence of these truths, particularly the experience of our deceased brother. I have laid before you an account of God's dealings with his soul from the time God was pleased to reveal his Son in him. Glory be to that rich sovereign grace, which did so much for him and by him. Glory be to the conqueror of death, who shewed him such abundant mercy on his dying bed. And Jesus is still the same; His promises, his grace, his power are the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Whosoever believeth in him shall never be confounded, never never confounded, but in life shall be kept by his power through faith unto salvation, in death safe, in eternity blessed. Trusting then and believing in him, while we live, may we live unto the Lord, and when we die, may we die unto the Lord; so that whether we live or die, we may be the Lord's. Oh that this may be the happy case of all who hear me to-day, and may the Lord incline our hearts to ask it of him in humble prayer, saying,

O thou God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, hear us for his sake, and give a blessing to the word now spoken. Make it the means of turning sinners from the error of their ways.

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Convince them by thy word and Spirit of the danger of their being by nature children of wrath, and of their continuing in that state. Teach them, gracious God, the number of their days, that they may apply their hearts unto wisdom. And convince them of righteousness, that they may see a perfect righteousness in thy dear Son, and by faith trust in it and live upon it, bringing forth abundantly the fruits of it in their hearts and lives. Be merciful, we beseech thee, O holy Father, to those among us, who are seeking thy face, and desiring to know thee as a reconciled God. O, give them that faith which worketh by love, and visit them with thy salvation. Let them see the felicity of thy chosen, and rejoyce in the gladness of thy people, and give thanks with thine inheritance. And make thine inheritance more thankful. May the partakers of thy precious love in all things be giving of thanks. May all that is within them bless thy holy name for thy free mercy, and may all that they have, and all that they are, be shewing forth the praise of the glory of thy grace. Keep them, O Lord our God, in an humble dependance upon thee. Carry them safe thro' the trials and difficulties of life, and give them power to hold on and persevere unto the end, that they may die in faith, and having happily finished their course may receive from thy free grace a never fading crown of glory. Grant this holy Father for the sake of thy beloved Son and our Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom with thee and the eternal Spirit, three co-equal persons in one Jehovah be endless praise, Amen.

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